

SHORT STORIES

THIRD READER GRADE

BY

ELIZABETH A. TURNER
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THIS little book is intended to be used as a supplementary reading book in primary classes using third readers.

Reading books for primary schools must be simple in thought and language, and, at the same time, interesting enough to hold the attention of the children, so that they will be read intelligently and with pleasure.

The aim of these stories is to entertain rather than to instruct, though where a little instruction could easily be given, it has been.

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STORIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN.



WHERE IS MY HAT, MOTHER?

THE LOST HAT.

"WHERE is my hat, mother?" said Johnny, one day.

"I don't know," answered his mother.

"Well, how can I go to school without my hat?" he said.

"Oh, I will let you wear my hat," said his mother; "I know where that is."

"But I don't want to wear your hat, mother. I should be ashamed to wear your hat to school," said Johnny, almost crying.

"Yes," answered his mother, "I suppose you would. But it seems to me you ought to be ashamed, too, not to know where your own hat is."

"I am sorry that I don't know," said Johnny; "but I don't see why I should be ashamed."

"Because," answered his mother, "it shows that you cannot be trusted to take care of your own things. If you cannot take care of a hat now, what are you going to do when you are a man, and have a great many things to take care of?"

"Oh," said Johnny, "I shall learn to take care of things before I grow to be a man."

"Not if you don't begin to learn now," answered his mother.

Just then, Johnny happened to look up in the cherry-tree by the door, and there was his hat among the branches.

"I see my hat!" he cried out. "I remember now that I took it off when I was up getting cherries, and then I forgot all about it."

So Johnny climbed up in the tree, got his hat, and ran off to school as fast as he could run.

JIP.

ONE pleasant morning, Jip, a pretty little white dog, said to his mother, "Mother, I want to go and take a run alone this morning. I have never been out of the yard yet, without you."

His mother said, "I am afraid you could not find your way home without me."

But little Jip thought he could.

So off he started, running along, and barking at all the boys he saw.

Some of the boys threw stones at him when he barked at them; and that frightened him, and made him run faster.

At last, poor little Jip found he had got so far away from home that he could n't tell how to get back again.

He sat down by an old fence, and began to cry, very sadly, "Bow-wow, bow-wow."

But no one took the least notice of him.

By and by he began to get hungry, and he said to himself, "I don't know what I shall do. Nobody will give me a bone. I suppose I shall starve."

Then he went slowly across the street, and looked in through an open gate; but seeing two boys at play in the yard, and remembering their treatment of him, he did n't venture in.

As he turned to go back, he saw his old friend Prince coming.

He rushed down the street to meet him, and said, with a glad bark, "O Prince, please take me home again. I don't know the way, and I am very hungry."

So Prince, being a very good-natured dog, showed him the way to go.

When he got home, his mother said, "Well, my little Jip, you must wait till you are older before you take another trip alone."

THE THREE PLANTS.

THREE flower pots stood side by side on the window sill.

In one had been planted a pea, in one a bean, and in the other a morning-glory.

The pea and the morning-glory had been up for two days, but the bean was nowhere in sight.

Finally, one morning the bean appeared, and was warmly welcomed by the other plants.

"But what have you been doing all this time?" asked the pea. "Why did n't you come up before?"

"Why," answered the bean, "I didn't know as I should ever get a chance to come up. That silly little girl that comes to give us water kept pushing me back into the earth every time I showed my head. I was so provoked! I tried to tell her to let me alone, but I could n't make her understand. One day her mother happened to see her just as she began to poke me down, and she said, 'Don't touch the plant, Lucy. Let it come up as it wants to.' How I did laugh when the little girl said, 'But, mother, it comes up wrong end first!'"



IN SCHOOL.

CORA'S SCHOLARS.

CORA is only six years old, and has been to school but a few weeks.

She says she likes to go pretty well, but she would rather play school, because she likes to be the teacher.

She has four scholars. One is her French doll, Louise, who can walk about and sing "I want to be an Angel." Another is her rubber doll, Polly, who is very quiet, for she can only sit still and stare. Cora is going to have Louise try to teach her to sing, but I don't believe she will succeed.

Her third scholar is Jip, the little black and tan dog. He is a great deal of trouble to her, for he will not sit still when she tells him to, and he says "bow-wow-wow" so much that he disturbs the whole school.

He knows how to stand up on his hind legs and hold a little block on his nose, but Cora does n't want him to do that in school. Louise and Polly might laugh at him.

Her fourth scholar, Pinkie, the kitten, is — well, "She is just the worst-acting little thing you ever saw!" Cora says.

She bites Jip's tail, she pulls Louise's hair, and scratches her face with her sharp little claws ; she climbs on all the chairs in the room, and the table, too, if she feels like it ; and sometimes, when she is all tired out with play, she sits down in the middle of the floor, washes her face, and then goes to sleep.

Pinkie and Jip play truant very often, but Cora says they don't know any better, so she can't scold them.

Cora's mother says, "I hope my little girl is not so much trouble to her teacher as Jip and Pinkie are to their teacher."

"Why, mother, of course I am not!" Cora answers. "I am a girl and know better than to do wrong ; but little Jip and Pinkie don't know anything, so they are not to blame for what they do."

BED TIME.

"COME, Willie, it is seven o'clock. It's time now to say good-night and go to bed," said mamma to her little boy.

"No, mamma," answered Willie, "I don't want to go yet. I want to put this wheel on my engine first."

"Do that in the morning," mamma said, "and come with me now."

So the little boy, very slowly and unwillingly, followed his mother upstairs, beginning to cry as he went.

When he reached his pretty chamber, he saw Dick, his pet canary, with his little head tucked under his wing, fast asleep.

"There, Dick knows it's bed time, Willie," said his mother.

"Wake up, old sleepyhead!" said the little boy, crossly.

Out from under his wing popped Dick's head.

"O dear," he said, "how you frightened me! I was sound asleep. What is the matter with you?"

Willie did not understand what Dick said, and

kept on crying and fretting. "I don't feel sleepy at all, and I know I sha'n't go to sleep till nine o'clock," he whined.

"You silly thing!" said Dick, out of patience. "You'll be asleep in five minutes. You can hardly keep your eyes open now."

Just then Willie's mother tucked him in bed, and left him with a good-night kiss; and sure enough, in five minutes the tired, cross little boy was fast asleep.

"There," said Dick, "now I suppose you 'll keep still and let me sleep."



THEY HEAR A DREADFUL NOISE.

THE FRIGHTENED ROBINS.

JENNY and Dicky Robin had only been in their nest in the apple tree about a week when one day they heard a strange noise all around them.

"Hark!" said Jenny. "What is that, Dicky?"

"I am sure I don't know," said Dicky. "I wish mother would come."

Then they stopped to listen.

Pitter patter, pitter patter, on the leaves fell the raindrops.

"O dear!" said the frightened baby robins, "what a terrible noise that is! Where can mother be!"

Just then they heard the sound of wings, and their mother came flying to her nest. Both little birds began to cry when they saw her.

"Why, what is the matter?" said the mother bird. "What are you crying for?"

"We heard a dreadful noise," said Dicky, with a sob.

"What kind of a noise?" asked the mother.

"I hear it now," said Jenny, "but it does n't sound quite so bad as it did."

"Pit pat, pit pat, pit pat," laughed the rain-drops as they listened.

"There!" said Dicky, "hear it! What is it, mother?"

"Why, you silly birds!" said their mother. "That is the rain. It has a beautiful sound to me, for I know how useful it is."

"I like it now," said Dicky.

"So do I," said Jenny.

Their mother laughed. "Little darlings!" she said, and away she flew to find another cherry.

THE FIREFLY AND THE KITTENS.

A LITTLE firefly was flying about in a garden one evening, when he happened to go by two little kittens.

"O dear!" said Buff, "what can that be!"

"It's a little lamp with wings," said Dilly.
"Let's run into the house. I'm afraid of it."

"I want to see what it is going to do," said Buff, who had more courage than her sister.

Just then the little insect lighted on a rose bush close to the kittens.

Dilly started for the house, but Buff said, "I am not going to run away. I don't believe the little lamp will hurt us."

"No, indeed," said the firefly, who had heard what Buff said. "I am a harmless little insect. I would n't hurt anything."

"Then won't you stay here a little while?" asked Buff. "I want to look at you, and I want my sister to come back and look at you, too."

"Oh, yes," answered the firefly, "I should like to rest a while. I have been flying about for a long time, and then I should like to look at you

and your sister. I never saw such fireflies as you are before."

"We are not fireflies," said Buff, "we are kittens." And she could n't help laughing at the firefly's funny mistake.

"Kittens!" said the firefly. "What are kittens?"

Buff had never thought about that. "I am sure I don't know," she said. "I will go and ask my mother."

"Never mind," said the firefly. "Call your sister, won't you? I want to look at her."

Little Dilly came to the door and peeped out.

"Don't be afraid," said the firefly. "I won't hurt you."

Dilly came out on the step and sat down.

"I like the looks of both of you," said the firefly, "only I think you ought to have some wings."

Then he flew away, and Buff and Dilly went in to tell their mother about him.



BUTTONING DOLLY'S BOOTS.

CARRY AND HER DOLL.

"LILLIE," said little Carry to her large wax doll, "I am going to spend the afternoon with Emma Wilson, and I think I shall take you with me. She said she wanted me to bring you the next time I came to see her. She has a doll just about as large as you are, so you will have somebody to play with, you see."

The doll did not answer Carry, but I suppose she felt pleased.

"What can you wear on your head, I wonder?" Carry went on. "I wish you had a hat. Emma's doll has a nice little white hat with a black feather on it. I must try to make you a hat soon."

Miss Dolly sat up very straight, and if she could have spoken, I think she would have said, "Why,

little mother, I don't want to go out with nothing on my head. Why did n't you make me a hat yesterday?"

Of course she could n't say this, so Carry went on talking to her.

"I think you had better wear your green silk dress," she said, "because your blue one is a little faded; and besides, it is rather too thin for such a cold day. I must put on your new red shoes, too. I wonder if Emma's doll has a pair of shoes."

Dolly did n't seem to care whether Emma's doll had a pair of shoes or not.

"I thought at first, Lillie, that I would let you ride in your carriage," Carry said, "but as you have no hat, I think I had better wrap you in my shawl, and carry you in my arms."

I know Lillie wished she could say, "Oh, yes, my little mother, that is much the better way."

Carry had been dressing her doll while she was saying all this to her, and, having finished buttoning the little boots, she said, "Now I must go downstairs and see what time it is. We are going to start at two o'clock, and I think it must be nearly two now."

So she put Miss Lillie very carefully in a large armchair, and went out of the room.

In a short time she came back with her cloak and hat on, and a little red shawl in her hand. She wrapped the shawl around the doll, and, taking her up in her arms, she said, "O Lillie, we 'll have a splendid time this afternoon, I know! I always have a nice time when I go to see Emma Wilson."

THE BLUE VIOLET.

A LITTLE blue violet had made its way into a garden where many beautiful flowers were growing.

"I don't belong here, I know," it said. "I ought to be down on the meadow with my sister violets. But I do enjoy looking at these lovely flowers. It's a pleasure to live here with them."

Just then a handsome butterfly flew into the garden. It fluttered from flower to flower, and at last it came to the little violet.

"Why, how did you come here?" it said. "You are only a wild flower."

"I know it," answered the violet, "and I don't know how I came here. I can't remember anything about it. But I am glad to live here."

"We are glad to have you with us, little violet," said a beautiful white rose that grew near by. "You are a wild flower, we know, but you are so quiet and modest a little thing that we are all quite fond of you."

The little violet laughed with pleasure. "I am so glad to hear you say that," it said. "I was

afraid you might not want me here, you are all so much finer than I am.”

“Not want you!” said a little girl, who came into the garden just as the violet was speaking; “why, you are the sweetest flower here. I would n’t have you go away for anything.”



THE SNOWMAN.

SNOW.

THE snow has been falling all day and all night, and everything is covered with a snowy mantle.

"How beautiful the world looks this morning!" Frank said, when he saw the white covering spread over the ground.

"Oh, yes!" cried little Eddie, "and won't we have fun playing with the snow!"

"Don't do any mischief with your snowballs," said their mother, as the boys went out.

They jumped into the new, soft snow, and rolled over and over in it till they looked like two snowmen with red instead of white faces. Then they made some snowballs and tried to see how far they could throw them.

After a while Frank said, "Now let's make a big snowman, and throw snowballs at him."

"Yes," said Eddie. "We'll put a hat on his head, and see which of us will knock it off first."

So the two children worked away with a will to make the snowman.

When he was finished, they put an old straw hat on his head, and then the fun began.

Thump, thump, thump went the snowballs, but the hat would not come off.

"Now," said Frank at last, as he made a very hard ball, "that hat will have to come off."

He threw the ball with all his strength as he spoke, and off came the hat and the head, too.

In a few minutes more the snowman had disappeared; and then the boys went into the house, and their mother gave each of them a large red apple.

"I like winter a great deal better than summer," said Eddie, "because there is n't any snow in summer."

"Yes, so do I," said Frank, "for we can't go skating in summer."

"But," their mother said, "there are many things you can do in summer that you can't do in winter. How would you like it if you could

never sail your boat, nor go in bathing, nor pick berries, nor see the beautiful flowers growing?"

"We should n't like it at all," answered both boys at once.

"I believe I like winter best in winter and summer best in summer," said Eddie.



JENNY TAKES THE KITTY IN HER ARMS.

JENNY'S VISITOR.

JENNY FELTON was eating her breakfast one cold winter morning when she heard a sound at the door that was like a faint little mew.

"Why, mother," she said, "I do believe that's a little kitten."

Her mother opened the door, and there, sure enough, was a little gray and white kitten, crying to be let in out of the cold.

"Poor little kitty," said Jenny, picking her up, "where did you come from?"

She took the cold little thing up to the warm stove, and sat down with her.

"I don't see how such a little kitten could have come here alone," said Jenny.

"I'll tell you what I think," said her mother. "I heard a carriage go past here last night, and this kitten was probably in it, and she either jumped or fell out, and was left."

"Yes," said Jenny, "I suppose the people in the carriage did n't know anything about it."

By this time the kitten was warm.

"I suppose you want something to eat now, kitty," said Jenny.

So she put some milk into a saucer, and set it down on the floor by the kitten.

You should have seen the hungry little thing eat!

She lapped the milk so fast that I think her little tongue must have got very tired before she had finished her breakfast.

Jenny and her mother and father stood watching the kitten, and they all laughed to see her.

"Now we must get a box, and make her a nice little bed," said Jenny, when, at last, kitty had eaten all she wanted.

"I will go out to the barn and see if I can find one," said her father.

"What would you name her, mother?" asked Jenny. "Don't you think Muffie would be a good name for her?"

"Yes, I think it would," answered her mother. "She is soft and gray, and so is your muff."

"I am going to tie a piece of blue ribbon around her neck," said Jenny. "I like to see ribbon on a cat's neck. It makes them look as if somebody cared for them. Don't you think so?"

Her mother laughed and said, "Well, perhaps it does."

Then father came in with the box. Jenny put some old pieces of soft flannel into it, and then laid the kitten on the soft bed.

Kitty smelled round the box for a minute, and then rolled herself up and cuddled down to sleep, purring softly as if to say, "You are all very kind to me, and I am a very happy little kitten."

THE ANT AND THE BUTTERFLY.

AN ant and a butterfly on the same bush happened to meet.

"That's a heavy load you are carrying," said the butterfly. "Why do you do such hard work?"

"Oh," answered the busy little ant, "I have to feed the children and take care of the house, and it keeps me busy almost all the time."

"I am glad I don't have to work so hard," the butterfly said. "I could n't anyway, for it would spoil my beautiful wings to work. Don't you ever get tired and wish you could fly about as I do?"

"I don't stop to ~~think~~ anything about it," said the ant. "I know there is all this work to be done, and I know that summer does n't last forever, and so I just work when I can."

"Then you don't work in winter?" said the butterfly. "Oh, no, I remember now the grasshopper told me you laid up food enough in summer to last you all winter, and he thought you were very wise to do so."

"Dear me!" said the ant, "I did hope I should never hear that foolish story again. What do you

suppose I want of food in winter? I sleep all winter long, and never taste food."

"Do you, really?" said the butterfly. "Why, how strange!"

"I suppose the grasshopper thought he was telling the truth," continued the ant, "but I hope you will contradict the story whenever you hear it, for there is n't a word of truth in it."

So saying, the ant hurried away with his load, and the idle butterfly flew about from flower to flower as long as the daylight lasted.

CARLO AND TABBY.

"TABBY," said Carlo, "did you kill little Mary's canary to-day?"

"Yes," answered Tabby, "but I did n't know it was her bird. I would n't have killed it if I had known."

"I don't see how you could help knowing Dicky," said Carlo. "You have seen him times enough, I should think."

"Well, Carlo," replied Tabby, "he was not in his cage. He was flying about the room. I never saw him do that before, and so when I saw him, without stopping to think who he was, I sprang right at him and killed him."

"Just as I did it Mary came into the room, and how she did cry! I never felt so sorry in my life. I went up to her and tried to tell her how sorry I was, but she could n't understand me, and she said, 'Go away, you cruel Tabby!' I wish I could get her another bird."

"Let's go together and look for one," said Carlo.

So they walked away into the woods. Pretty soon they saw a nest up in an oak tree.

"I wonder if there are any young birds in that nest," said Carlo.

"Let's sit down near and wait till the old bird comes," said Tabby.

They sat down, and in a few minutes the old bird came flying to her nest.

Tabby saw that the robin had an insect in her bill, so she said to her, "Mrs. Robin, will you please give my mistress one of your little ones? Her own pretty canary was killed to-day, and she feels very badly about it. I should be very glad to find another bird for her."

"Oh, no, no!" said the mother bird, "I would n't give away one of my little ones for all the world!"

"But my mistress will be very kind to your baby," said Tabby. "She is kind to everybody."

"Perhaps she would be," said the mother bird, "but she would not know how to take care of him."

"She always took very good care of her canary bird," said Carlo.

"We are not canaries," said the mother bird. "We do not like to live in cages, and it would break my heart to know that one of my dear little ones was in so dreadful a place. No, no, don't ask me again."

Then she flew up to her nest, and Carlo and Tabby walked slowly towards home.

"Well, Tabby," said Carlo, "I don't think I blame the mother bird."

"Oh, no," said Tabby, "we can't blame her. But I do wish I had not killed Mary's bird!"



MY NAME IS SNOWBELL.

MARY AND SNOWBELL.

A LITTLE girl was walking in the fields one day in summer, when she came to a beautiful pond.

"Oh, what a pretty place !" said the little girl. "I will lie down on this soft bank and rest, and look at the water. I will take off my hat and put it on the ground for a pillow ;" and she laughed to think what a funny pillow a hat would make.

When she had been lying very still for some time, listening to the birds which were singing all about her, she thought she heard a sweet little voice say, "Little girl, have you come to play with me?"

She looked all around, but could not see any one.

"Who is talking to me?" she said. "I should like some one to play with, but I cannot see you anywhere."

"Why, here I am," said the little voice, "close to your head."

The child raised her head, but all she could see was a beautiful little white flower.

"I wonder if this flower is talking to me," she said; "I don't see any one here."

"Yes," said the sweet voice, "I am a flower, and my name is Snowbell. What is your name?"

"Why," the little girl answered, "my name is Mary; but I did n't know that flowers could talk, and I am sure I don't see how you can play."

"Why not?" the flower said.

"Because," answered Mary, "you cannot run about, or play ball, or jump rope, or do anything but just keep still in one place."

"But that is all I want to do," the little flower answered, "and I am as happy as I can be. When the soft wind blows, I bend my head and play with the grass or this little bush beside me; and sometimes when little girls lie down by my side and go to sleep, I put my head down on their faces and wake them up."

Then Mary laughed and said, "Well, little flower, don't you get hungry sometimes, and then don't you wish you could run away and get something to eat?"

"What a silly girl you are!" answered the flower. "Don't you know that I get what I want to eat right here? God knew that I should be hungry sometimes, and as he made me so that I could not move around, of course he put my food where I could get it without moving."

"Well, where is it?" said Mary. "I don't see anything good to eat here."

"You cannot see it," answered the flower, "because part of it is in the ground, where I can get it with my tiny roots; the rest is in the air. I eat that part with my leaves."

"Oh, how funny!" said the little girl. "I never thought before how flowers *did* eat; and when it rains you can drink, can't you?"

Just then a bird flew down on a bush close by the little girl, and began to sing so loudly that Mary heard it, and opened her eyes.

"Birdie," she said, after looking around her for a minute, "I must have been asleep, and you woke me with your pretty song."

Then she arose and went towards home, thinking all the way about the little flower.

When she reached home she told her mother about it, and her mother said, "That was a dream, Mary."

MICE IN THE MEAL-CHEST.

A LITTLE mouse, whose name was Nibbler, thought he would take a walk one fine day. So he ran out of his hole and went up to a farmhouse to look for something to eat.

On the way he saw old Tab, the cat that lived at the farmhouse.

"Ah, Tab," said he to himself, "you would like to have me for your dinner, I know; but I don't think you will this time."

He kept very still till Tab was out of sight.

Then he said to himself, with a laugh, "If old Tab had known there was a good fat mouse so near, she would n't have gone into the woods to look for a bird or a squirrel."

He had just started on again when he met little Graypaws, a mouse who lived in the same barn with him, and whom he often went to visit.

"Why, Graypaws," he said, "I am glad to see you. Where are you going?"

"I was just taking a walk," answered Graypaws, "and I am glad to meet you, too. Are you going up to the farmhouse?"

"Yes," said Nibbler. "Come on, will you?"

Old Tab has just gone down to the woods to find a squirrel for her dinner, so we sha'n't have to look out for her. She went close by where I was hidden; but I kept very still, I can tell you, till she was gone, for I don't mean to let her bite off my head."

"No," replied Graypaws, "she sha'n't eat me, if I can help it. What a fierce, ugly looking creature she is, is n't she? I'd rather meet a dozen boys, any time, fierce as they are, than to meet her. I can always get away from a boy; but a cat, O dear! A cat is just terrible."

"That's a fact," said Nibbler; "but if we stand here talking so long, old Tab will get back, and then we shall have to go home without a mouthful of dinner. So come on, I know where they keep their meal, and I'll show you."

So on they went, and in a few minutes reached the farmhouse.

They crept quietly in through a little hole which was under the door, and were soon in the meal-chest.

They tasted the sweet, fresh meal, and found it so nice that I don't know but they would have spent the whole afternoon in the chest if an accident had n't happened.

Graypaws' tail, which was very long, got covered up in the meal, and Nibbler, not seeing it of course, gave the end such a sharp little bite that Graypaws could n't help giving a loud squeal.

In an instant, George, the farmer's boy, came running into the meal-room, calling, "Kitty, kitty, kitty; I do believe there 's a mouse here!"

The two frightened little mice heard him coming, and, quick as a flash, they sprang out of the chest and down through another open door into the yard.

And then did n't they set off at full speed for home!

They did not stop once to speak to each other or to look behind them till they were safe in their own barn; and then Graypaws said, "O dear! How my heart beats! It is lucky for us that Tab was n't there, Nibbler."

THE TADPOLE.

Two little boys were one day playing on the bank of a shallow pond, and amusing themselves by throwing stones into it and watching the ripples spread out over the glassy surface.

All at once, a little head popped out of the water, and a little squeaky voice said, "Why are you throwing stones at me?"

"I was n't throwing stones at you," answered one of the boys. "I did n't see you at all. I wanted to watch the ripples, that 's all."

"Oh, well, keep on then," answered the swimmer. "I'll keep out of the way. Perhaps I'd better come over to your side of the pond, so you can throw over me."

Over he came as he spoke, and the two boys looked at him with much interest.

"What are you, anyway?" said Lester, the smaller of the two boys. "You don't look just like a fish."

"No," answered the swimmer, "I am a frog, or I shall be very soon."

"A frog!" said Lester. "If I had never seen a frog, you might make me believe that; but I have seen one, and I know they don't look at all like you."

"That is very true," the swimmer replied, "but I shall be one, nevertheless. Come down here again in a week or two, and you'll see me a frog."

"Seems to me I have heard something about frogs not being frogs when they are young," said the older boy. "What is it they call you now?"

"They call me a tadpole," he answered, "but I don't like the name very well. If I had chosen my own name, I should have called myself a froglet. Then, perhaps, people would believe I was going to be a frog some day."

"You seem to think frogs are very fine creatures," said Lester. "I don't think much of them. They are cold-blooded things, and they only know how to swim and croak."

"Well," said the tadpole, "what do boys know? All I have ever seen can only run and shout and throw stones."

Then away he swam, without waiting to hear what the boys would say.

THE SUN AND THE MOON.

"I WISH you would set," said the moon to the sun.

"I shall, very soon," replied the sun; "but why are you in so great a hurry?"

"I want *my* beautiful light to show," said the moon, "and while you make such a glare, no one can see me."

"Indeed!" the sun answered, "I rather think people care a great deal more for my glare, as you call it, than they do for your pale light. You cannot warm the earth, and make the leaves grow, and the flowers breathe out their fragrance, as I can. You are really good for nothing."

At these words, a dark frown passed over the face of the moon.

"Good for nothing!" it said. "I give as much pleasure with my silvery light as you do with your dazzling brightness. And I never do any harm, as you do sometimes."

"You may give some pleasure," the sun answered, "but you do very little good, if you do no harm; and you know people don't even care to see your

light very long. They soon go to sleep and leave you shining brightly. They never treat me so."

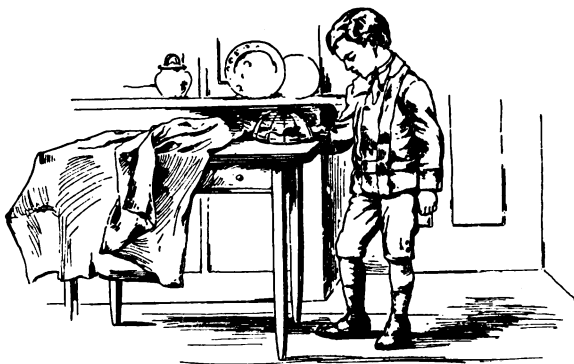
At these words, another frown passed over the moon's bright face.

"I do not deny that," it then said, "but I think as people grow wiser, all this will change. It is something for which I never could account."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the sun as he went out of sight. "Is that all you can't account for? Account for your light, if you please. Where would that be if I was n't about, you silly moon?"

Not a word answered the moon.

Indeed, what could it answer?



DID YOU PUT THIS TRAP HERE TO CATCH ME?

WILLIE AND THE MOUSE.

WILLIE stood looking at a frightened little mouse that the cook had caught in the trap she had set in the closet.

The little mouse, with its bright black eyes, was looking at Willie with as much curiosity as the little boy looked at him.

"You are a cunning little thing, if you are a nuisance," Willie said at last. "I wonder what made you do so silly a thing as to go into this trap."

"Why," spoke up the mouse, "how did I know it was a trap? I smelled cheese, which I like very much, and in a minute I saw it in this little wire

house close to me. If I had known that I could n't get out of the wire house after I had eaten the cheese, of course I should n't have gone in. Did you put it here on purpose to catch me?" And the mouse gave a sharp glance into Willie's face.

"I did n't put it here," said Willie, "but I think that is what cook put it here for. She says you gnaw holes in her pantry floor and nibble the food on the shelves, and we don't like that, you know."

"No," said the mouse, "I am sure I did n't know it. I did n't know it was your pantry or your food. I thought I had as much right to it as anybody."

"Oh, no," said Willie, "you have no right to come into our house at all."

"I wish I had never come," sobbed the mouse; and a tear rolled off the end of his little nose.

Willie looked serious at that.

"Did n't your mother ever tell you to look out for traps?" he asked.

"No," answered the mouse, sadly. "My mother disappeared when I was very small. I dare say she was caught in a trap herself. You look like a kind little boy," the mouse went on, after a short pause. "Why won't you open the door and let

me out? If you were in my place, you would want to be let out, would n't you?"

"Yes," answered Willie, "and I should be glad to let you out. But what would the cook say to me?"

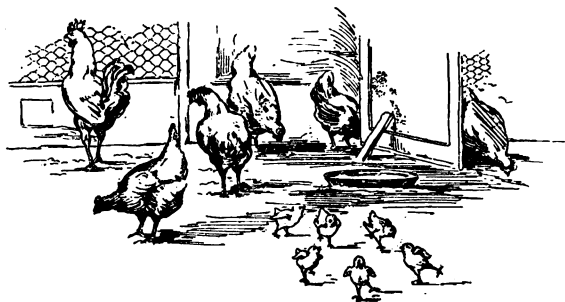
"Tell the cook that if I had known she did n't want me to nibble her bread, I would n't have touched it," said the mouse, earnestly.

"I don't suppose you did know," said Willie, "and I will let you out this time if you will promise me never to come into this house again."

"Oh, yes!" said the mouse, eagerly. "If you will only open the door, I will never, as long as I live, come near this house again."

Then Willie opened the trap and out ran the mouse; and as quick as a flash he disappeared into his hole under the back stairs.

The next morning cook found that her loaf of bread had been nibbled again, but Willie says he knows very well it was n't *his* mouse that nibbled it.



THE CHICKENS START ON THEIR JOURNEY.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CHICKENS.

SIX little chickens made up their minds that they should like better to live down on the meadow by themselves than in the yard with so many hens and turkeys. So, one bright summer morning, as soon as the sun was up, they set out on their journey to the meadow, running and jumping and flapping their little wings with delight.

"Oh, how beautiful it is!" cried one. "I never saw the grass so green."

"I never saw the sky so blue," said another.

"I never saw the leaves shine and sparkle so," said a pretty white chick.

"I never found so many grasshoppers," said the largest chicken, as he gobbled one up.

Just then a robin redbreast flew on a tree near by, and began to sing a sweet song. The chickens stopped to listen.

"I can sing better than that bird," said the smallest chick. "Hear me. Peep, peep, peep!"

"No, little brother," said the oldest chicken, "I don't think we can sing quite so well as the birds, but we know more than they do. Why, that bird is afraid of our old yellow cat! I saw it fly away the other day when kitty came to the door to look out."

"Oh, what a silly bird!" cried the other chickens. "We would n't be afraid of a cat!"

Then on they hurried again, as pleased and happy as any little chickens in the world.

They had almost reached the meadow when suddenly they heard a strange noise over their heads.

What was it! They all stopped, looked up, and O dear, there, right over their heads, getting ready to pounce down upon them, they saw a fierce great hawk!

Poor frightened little chickens! What were they to do!

They had n't much time to think about that,

though, for in an instant the hawk was down, and had caught the smallest chick in her sharp claws.

Off she flew with it to the nest where her hungry young ones were waiting for their dinner, — and only five little chickens were left.

They watched the hawk in her flight through the air till they could see her no longer, then turned sorrowfully back towards the old home they had left so merrily.

The robin was still singing in the tree as they passed, but they neither saw nor heard it.

Not a chick spoke a word till they were almost back to the farmyard gate.

Then one said, in a mournful tone, "The grass is not so green as it was."

The next one shook his head sadly and added, "The sky is not so blue as it was," and his eyes filled with tears.

"The leaves do not sparkle now," said the white chick.

"I don't want any more grasshoppers," said the largest chicken, and he would n't catch a big one just before him in the path.

When they entered the farmyard, their sad and downcast looks attracted the attention of the hens

and turkeys, and they all came hurrying up to find out what was the matter.

So the largest chick gave an account of their long journey and the loss of their young brother.

All listened attentively, and when he had finished, a wise old hen said, "Well, chickens, I hope this misfortune will teach you to be contented with your lot in life. Here you have a pleasant home, with plenty to eat and drink, and what does a chicken need more?"



NOW I'VE GOT YOU!

THE WILFUL LITTLE SQUIRREL.

IN a hollow tree, in the orchard near Mary's house, there lived five little squirrels.

They were a happy little squirrel family, and had only one thing in the world to trouble them, and that was Rover, the large dog that lived at the farmhouse.

He would bark at them and chase them whenever he got a chance, so that the old squirrels sometimes thought they should have to give up their pleasant orchard home, and move farther away from the farmhouse.

When the father and mother squirrel went away from home to get food for their children, they always said, "Now, children, you must keep near our tree, or Rover will catch you."

The little ones obeyed their parents, and played about in the branches of the tree ; or, if they went down to the ground, they kept close to the tree, so they could run quickly to their nest if they saw or heard the dog.

But one day, I am sorry to say, the largest and strongest of the little squirrels said to his brothers, "I can see a basket of very nice nuts up by the farmhouse door, and Rover is nowhere to be seen, so I think I'll just run up there and get a few of them. I know I can run faster than Rover can, if he should happen to see me. And don't you want me to get you some of those splendid nuts?"

His brothers said, "Yes, we should like some of the nuts, but mother and father said we must not go up to the farmhouse ; so don't go, brother. Let's climb up in the apple tree and get an apple ; we can get that without disobeying father and mother."

But the foolish little squirrel thought he knew as well as his parents what it was best for him to do, so he said, "No ; I am tired of apples, and I am going to have some of those nuts."

Off he started then, running along the branches and springing from tree to tree, until he reached the orchard fence.

Then he looked carefully all around to make sure that Rover was nowhere about, and sprang lightly to the ground.

He had only a very short distance to go from the orchard fence to the house, and was soon at the basket of nuts.

He seized a nice large one in his mouth, jumped down from the basket, and was running rapidly back to the orchard when, looking towards the barn, what should he see coming straight towards him, and barking, as much as to say, "Now I've got you!" but Rover, the dog.

Poor little squirrel! how his heart beat! For a moment he could hardly breathe.

Then he thought, "There is only one thing I can do to save my life, and that is to run as I never ran before."

He dropped the nut he had in his mouth, and set off as swiftly as he could go toward his home; but, sad to tell, he found that Rover would catch him before he could get there, though he was running as fast as his little legs could take him.

How he wished now that he had obeyed his kind father and mother!

He began to cry, and to call out in squirrel language, "Father! mother! come and help me!"

But father and mother were far away, and could not hear him.

Rover had almost reached him ; indeed, he had just raised his paw to seize the poor tired little squirrel, when what do you think happened ?

Why, little Mary came to the door to see what Rover was barking so loudly for, and when she saw the frightened little squirrel she ran out very quickly, calling, " Rover ! Rover ! here, here, come here, sir ! "

Rover stopped at once when he heard his kind little mistress's voice, and ran back to her.

Then our little squirrel hurried on to his home, and arrived there, tired out and almost sick with fright, just as his mother reached home.

" Oh, mother," he said, " I will never disobey you again ; for if it had not been for little Mary I should have been killed to-day."

THE CATERPILLAR.

"SEE that horrid, ugly caterpillar, Jennie; I am dreadfully afraid of them," said Amy Snow, as she was coming home from school one afternoon.

"Why are you afraid of them, Amy?" asked her friend, Jennie Allen. "They are harmless, and you know they turn into the pretty butterflies. I hope you are not afraid of a butterfly, are you?"

"Oh, no, of course not," answered Amy, laughing; "a butterfly is very different from a caterpillar, if it is one first."

"I'll tell you what we will do, Amy," said Jennie; "we'll take this caterpillar home, and see just how it turns itself into a butterfly."

"Yes, let's do it," answered Amy; "you carry it home, and I'll get a glass ready to put it into."

"Would n't you like to carry it home yourself, Amy?" asked Jennie, laughing, as she took up the caterpillar.

When the girls arrived at Jennie's home, Mrs. Allen, Jennie's mother, said, "What are you going to do with that caterpillar, girls?"

Then they told her why they had brought the caterpillar home.

"I think that is a very good plan," she said. "I suppose you know what to do with it, don't you?"

"Yes, mother," answered Jennie; "we are going to put it into a glass, and cover the glass with paper to prevent its getting out."

"You are not going to stifle it, are you?" asked her mother.

"Oh, no; of course we shall cut some holes in the paper to let in the air," answered the girls.

"And you will have to feed it, too," said Mrs. Allen.

"Feed it," said Jennie; "why, what shall we feed it with? I don't know what caterpillars eat, I am sure."

"On what did you find it?" asked her mother.

"We found it on a carraway plant," answered Jennie.

"Well, then, probably you can feed it on carraway leaves," said her mother. "You can try those, at any rate, and if it won't eat them, I don't see but you will have to let it go; for of course you would n't want to starve it to death."

"Oh, no, indeed!" cried both the girls; "we won't keep it if it won't eat the carraway leaves."

Then Amy went out and broke off a stem of carraway, and Mrs. Allen and Jennie put the caterpillar and the stem into the glass, and tied the paper carefully over the top.

They soon found that the caterpillar would eat the carraway leaves, and seemed to like them; so they supplied it with fresh green leaves every day.

At the end of about a week, one morning when Jennie was going to feed it as usual, she noticed that it hardly moved when she removed the paper from the glass, but looked as if something was the matter with it.

"Mother," she cried, "I am afraid my caterpillar is going to die, after all my care. It looks almost dead now."

"Oh, no, I think not," replied her mother; "just wait awhile and see what happens next. You will not have to feed it any more; just cover it up again, and let it be for a while."

Jennie did as her mother said, and in a day or two the caterpillar had covered itself all over with what looked like a sort of coarse web, and had fastened itself by a slender thread to the stem.

Jennie's mother told her that this was called a chrysalis, and that she could n't tell how long the

worm would remain in this state, as different kinds of caterpillars remained for different lengths of time in the chrysalis state.

"Well," said Jennie, "we shall have to wait and see then, I suppose."

They did not have to wait long for this caterpillar to change, however; for in about three weeks Mrs. Allen said to Jennie one morning, "Look in your glass this morning, Jennie."

Jennie looked, and you can imagine her delight when she saw, in place of the ugly chrysalis, a beautiful butterfly fluttering its delicate wings.

She seized the glass and hurried into Amy's house, to show Amy the wonderful sight.

Amy looked at it a few minutes, admiring the bright colors on its wings and body, and then she said, "Let's take it out into the garden now and take off the paper."

So they went out into the garden and held the glass down near a lovely lily in full bloom in the garden.

In a minute the butterfly came slowly out of the glass and crawled up on the flower.

Then, as if pleased at finding itself in the pure, fresh air, sweet with the fragrance of so many flowers, it started off, flying gaily from flower to

flower, and, with its long trunk or tongue, drinking in the juice from each.

In a short time it took its flight out of the garden, and the two girls lost sight of it.

WHY THE TEA-KETTLE BOILED OVER.

"JUST hear the tea-kettle!" said a little iron frying-pan to its friend, the stove; "did you ever hear such a noise?"

"No," answered the stove, angrily, "I certainly never did. What is the matter with you, you noisy tea-kettle?"

"Why," bubbled the tea-kettle, "I am trying to let the cook know that I ought to be taken off. I am boiling as hard as I can; and if she does n't come quickly and take me off, I am afraid I shall boil all over you, and then cook will have to black you again."

"I don't see why you need to boil over on me," answered the stove; "you do that almost every day, and I don't like it, I'd have you know."

"Well," replied the tea-kettle, "I don't want to boil over, but I can't help it. The cook fills me too full. She does n't seem to know that hot water needs more room than cold water. So, as she fills me full of cold water, of course when the water begins to boil, it comes out, and I can't help it. You should blame the cook, not me."

"Well, rattle away then, as loudly as you please," said the stove. "Perhaps the cook will hear you if you make noise enough."

And sure enough she did hear, and came running in to take off the tea-kettle, saying, "There! I wish I knew what makes that tea-kettle always boil over." . But the tea-kettle did n't say a single word more.

THE LAST LEAF.

OCTOBER had come and gone, and one by one the leaves on the tall elm tree opposite Mabel's home had fallen to the ground, — all but one little leaf. Now November was here and still the little leaf clung to its branch on the tree.

"Why don't you come down here on the warm earth with the rest of us?" asked the leaves on the ground. "Very soon the snow will come, and you will be cold up there then."

"Oh, I want to see how it looks when everything is white with snow," answered the leaf, "and I want to watch the snowbirds. I am going to stay here all winter."

"We'll see about that," said the wind, who had heard what the leaf said.

That night Jack Frost, the north wind, and the east wind met together, and all agreed that it was time for the leaf to come down.

"I can't have leaves about where I am," said Jack.

The great tree heard them whispering together,

and felt the icy chill that came while they were talking.

"Better go down, little leaf," it said. "The snow is coming, and will cover your brothers and sisters over so you cannot find them when you get ready to fall."

The leaf shivered as the tree spoke, but being a wilful little thing, it said, "I am not going to fall. I want to see the snow come down, and I am not afraid of the cold."

Pretty soon the wind began to whistle through the branches of the tree, and the snow began to fall, slowly at first, then faster and faster till the ground was white ; but still the leaf would not leave its place.

"You silly thing!" said the wind at last, "don't you know how much better off you will be on the ground ? Go down with your brothers and sisters."

Then, with a roar that almost frightened the great tree itself, it rushed towards the leaf and struck it with all its force. Snap went the stem, and the leaf, with an angry little crackle, began to fall !

Before it reached the ground, the wind seized it and sent it across the street and over a fence ; so

when at last it sank upon the ground, it was in a strange place, and could not find its brothers and sisters.

“O dear!” sighed the lonesome little leaf, “I wish I had gone when the rest did!”

THE FIGURE FAIRIES.

"I JUST hate this lesson! I wish there were no arithmetics in the world, then I should n't have to be bothered with examples that won't come right," grumbled a boy about eleven years old; and he closed his book with a bang and put down his slate. "I suppose I must stay in here all the afternoon, for mother said I could n't go out to play till my lesson was done, and I am sure I can never do it."

Just then, happening to glance at his arithmetic, he saw that it was covered with tiny little beings who were looking very sharply at him, as if they had something they wished to say to him.

Being much astonished at this unexpected sight, the boy stared at the strange little beings for some minutes without saying a word. At last he said, "Well, who are you, and where did you come from?"

"We are figure fairies," answered one of the little creatures, "and we have come to help you get your lesson."

"I don't believe you can do anything for me," said the boy; "you are too small."

The fairies laughed and said, "Oh, you can't judge of our power to help you by our size. We think we can help; so take your slate and go to work again, and we'll try."

The boy took up his slate readily, amused at the idea of being aided by such queer little people.

"Now put us all on the slate," said one of the fairies.

"I don't want you on the slate," answered the boy; "you'll be in my way there."

"No," the fairies said, "we'll keep away from your hand. We must be very near, so we can watch you."

"Well," the boy replied, laughing, and helping them up on the slate, "watch away then."

Very much pleased at being watched by such tiny teachers, he went to work with right good will.

He did the first example correctly, and had nearly finished the second one without having made a single mistake, and without a word being spoken by the fairies.

Stopping work for a minute then, he said, "How well I am getting along! You help me just by watching me, don't you, fairies?"

The fairies smiled, but said nothing.

The boy thought he should get on without any trouble now, with the help of the fairies, so he began to think about the good time he should have playing ball when his lesson was done. "I must hurry up and finish," he said to himself; "five times seven are twenty-one; write down the one and carry the two"; but when he attempted to write the one, two or three of the little beings seized his pencil, and the others took hold of his hand and held it, so he could not make a mark.

"Come, now, that is n't the way to help," he said; "what's the matter?"

"Twenty-one is the matter," said a bright looking little fairy.

The boy looked at his slate a minute, and then he said, "Oh, I said seven times five are twenty-one, did n't I? Well, I meant thirty-five."

The fairies all laughed when the boy said this, and looked at each other, as much as to say, "We know better than he does what he meant." But they let go his hand, and allowed him to write the thirty-five.

"That's the way you are going to help, is it?" he asked; "then I suppose I shall have to think before I write, if I don't want to be stopped again."

"You certainly will," answered a sharp little voice. "If you had been thinking about what you were doing just now, you would n't have made such a careless mistake."

"No," said the boy, "I don't believe I should; but," he added, "you know a good deal for such little things, don't you?"

"Oh, yes," answered a fairy, "we know everything about numbers. But hurry and do your work; don't stop to talk to us."

So the boy went on, and I am glad to say that, as he worked very carefully, the lesson was done, and done correctly, in a very short time.

"There!" he said, as he wrote the last figure, "I'm glad you came to help me, fairies, for I was going to give up the lesson, and now here it is all done. You are very kind if you are small. Do you think you shall come out again to-morrow?"

"No," said one of the fairies; "we can only appear to mortals once in a hundred years, so you will never see us again. But we will give you a rule, which, if followed, will always help you. It is this: Whatever you do, do with your might. Don't half do anything. No boy ever amounted to much yet who did n't put his best work into whatever he attempted."

The boy looked thoughtful a minute, and then he said, "I suppose that is a pretty good rule to follow, but I am afraid it would be hard work for me always to follow it."

Just then the door opened, and the boy turned to see who was coming.

When he looked round again, the fairies had all disappeared.



JO AND TIM.

LITTLE TIM'S CHRISTMAS.

CHAPTER I.

"OH, Jo, this is good!" said one poor little boy to another, as they nestled into a corner where the sun was shining bright and warm. "I should think there was a fire here."

"Yes," answered Jo, "I wish the sun would shine into our room like this. It would n't be so cold there then, would it?"

"No," said little Tim, "nor so dark. I wish I could go to the sun to live. Then I should be warm all the time."

Jo, who was two or three years older than Tim, laughed as he said, "I don't believe you would find the sun a very good place to live in, Tim."

Just as he said this a gentleman wearing a fur coat passed by, and as soon as Tim saw him, he cried out, "I know who that is, Jo. That's Santa Claus. I know him by that fur coat. He always wears a fur coat like that. You see he's out getting Christmas presents for folks."

"Yes," said Jo, "if he is Santa Claus, I suppose that is what he is doing."

"I wonder if he knows how much we want some presents," little Tim said. "Not candy or tops though,—I don't want such things half so much as I want a thick, warm coat and a pair of boots without any holes in them. Do you, Jo?"

"No," Jo said, "I should like the coat and boots best."

"I wish I had stopped him and told him what we want," said Tim. "Mother said she was afraid Santa Claus would forget her boys this year; and if I had told him, he could n't forget about it, I know, for next week Christmas comes."

Jo's face looked very sad as he said, "Mother would n't let Santa Claus forget us if she could help it, Timmy."

"No, I know that well enough," answered Tim. "She told me she would tell Santa Claus about us if she knew where to find him. There he is now,

coming out of that store a little way down the street on the other side ! Now I 'm going to speak to him," and he was off like a flash before Jo could stop him.

He had to run some distance before he came up to the gentleman ; but at last he reached him, and going up to him, he said in an eager voice, " Mr. Santa Claus, I should like to speak to you a minute, if you please."

Mr. Santa Claus stopped at once, and looking kindly down at the earnest little face raised to his own, he said, with a smile, " Well, my little man, what do you want ?"

" I wanted to tell you," answered little Tim, " what I should like to have you bring me for a Christmas present. My mother said she was afraid you would forget all about Jo and me this year ; and so, when I saw you, I thought I 'd just tell you what we want, and — you won't forget us, will you ?"

The gentleman did not speak for a minute ; then he said gently, putting his hand on the little boy's head, " What is your name, child, and where do you live ?"

" I live in Union Court, and my name is Tim," answered the boy.

"Tim what?" asked the gentleman.

"Tim Scott," replied the child; "and I would rather have a warm coat or a new pair of boots for a present than candy or playthings, if you please; and so would Jo."

"Don't you like candy?" the gentleman said.

"Yes, sir," said Tim; "but, you know, I don't really need it, and mother says we must try and get along without things that we don't need, even if we do like them."

The gentleman looked with a face full of kindness and pity at the little boy, as he said, "Well, my boy, I am not Santa Claus, but I am one of his messengers, and I will let him know where you live and what you would like to have him bring you; and if he forgets you after that, he is n't the sort of Santa Claus I think he is."

Little Tim's face lighted up joyfully, and he said, "Thank you, sir. Now I'll go and tell Jo what you say," and he hurried back to the place where Jo was waiting for him.

"Oh, Jo," he cried, as soon as he reached him, "I am so glad I spoke to him!"

He told Jo all that the gentleman had said, and then the two boys ran home to tell their mother the joyful news.

CHAPTER II.

THE week has gone, and now it is the night before Christmas. In her cold and cheerless room the mother of Jo and little Tim is sitting, thinking sadly that her little boys' Christmas this year will not be a very happy one, when a loud knock at the door makes her start.

"Can it be that Santa Claus has remembered my darlings?" she said to herself, half laughing.

She opened the door quickly, but no person was to be seen.

She was just going to close it again, when she thought she saw some large object on the step.

Going back into the room, she brought a light to the door, and there, sure enough, was a large box.

She took it into the room, and then she saw plainly written on the top of it: "For Jo and Tim, from Santa Claus."

The knock had awakened the two boys, who were sitting up, with very wide open eyes, when their mother came in with the box.

"Oh, mother!" cried little Tim, "I knew good old Santa Claus would not forget us! Open the box, please, and let me see if he has sent what I asked him for."

"No," said his mother, "the room is so cold I don't want you to sit up. Go to sleep now, and in the morning we will see what is in the box."

So the little boys nestled down again, and went to sleep with such happy faces that I think if the kind messenger of Santa Claus had seen them, he would have said, "How glad I am that I did what I could to make these little children's Christmas a merry one."

In the morning, as soon as it was light enough to see, the boys were up and at work trying to open the box.

At last it was open, and the presents were spread out before them on the floor.

How little Tim's eyes shone, and how he danced about with joy when he saw what was in the box! There was a thick coat and a pair of shoes for each of the boys, and a good warm shawl for their mother.

Besides these things, there was a large bag of nuts, candy, and oranges.

Oh, what a merry Christmas this was for these poor little children!

Do you wonder that Jo whispered softly to his mother, "I hope God will make that kind man's Christmas as happy as he has made ours."

THE STORY THE MOUSE TOLD THE CAT.

LONG, long years ago, a young mouse happened to be out in a great forest one day, when, all of a sudden, a fierce old cat that was prowling about sprang upon him.

"Oh, please let me go, ma'am," said the frightened little mouse. "I won't ever get in your way again."

"I believe you," answered the cat, looking down at the trembling mouse with a fierce grin. "You'll never get in anybody's way again."

"Please, ma'am," begged the little mouse, "I never did you any harm, and I never will. Why do you wish to harm me?"

"I am hungry," said the cat. "I want you to eat."

"I am too small to make much more than a bite for you," pleaded the poor mouse. "Do let me go this time. I only came out to look for my mother. I did n't expect to meet you."

"No, I suppose not," said the cat, with another ugly grin. Then, after a short pause, she said, "You *are* a bit of a creature, to be sure. Suppose

I should let you go this time, what would you do for me ? ”

“ Do you like to hear stories ? ” asked the mouse, eagerly. “ If you do, I will tell you the best one I know.”

“ Yes,” answered the cat, “ I like them. Begin.”

“ Once upon a time,” began the mouse at once, “ there lived a very wise and good king. He had an only son, a boy about twelve years old. He was a beautiful boy, and as good as he was beautiful. And yet whenever his father looked at him, his face grew sad and often tears filled his eyes. You will wonder at this, but when I tell you that never in his life had this child spoken one word, you will see that the poor father had good cause for sadness.”

“ What in the world ailed the boy ? ” interrupted the cat.

“ That was what his father had tried in vain to find out,” went on the mouse. “ He had consulted all the famous doctors he could hear of, but not one of them had been able to do anything for the unfortunate little boy.

“ At last one night — it was the night of his son’s twelfth birthday — as the king sat in his garden, thinking sadly of his poor child, he happened to

glance towards a tall white lily which had blossomed that morning.

"Suddenly, out from the middle of the lovely white flower, a little head appeared, and soon there stood on a petal of the lily the smallest and prettiest little being the king had ever seen.

"With one tiny finger she beckoned him to come to her. When he came near, she said, and her voice sounded so soft and sweet, 'Why do you mourn, king? Tell me, and I will try to help you.'

" 'If you only could!' answered the king, speaking half to himself. Then he told her about his boy and his terrible misfortune.

" 'I understand,' she said, when he had finished, 'and I can help your son. You must let me take him with me and keep him for six months. At the end of that time I promise to bring him back to you able to speak as well as we can.'

" 'Take him,' said the king, 'and if you can cure him, I will give you anything you ask of me.'

" 'Bring him here, then,' said the fairy; and when the boy came, she reached up a slender wand she carried, and gently touched his eyelids.

"Instantly he fell into a deep sleep, and would

have fallen to the ground had not his father caught him and laid him down.

"When he looked up again, the fairy was nowhere to be seen, but in her place stood a beautiful white pony.

" 'Put your boy upon my back,' said the fairy pony. As soon as this was done, the pony was off so swiftly that the king saw a sudden flash of white, and then pony and boy had disappeared."

"Did the fairy do the boy any good?" again interrupted the cat.

The mouse nodded and went on with his story.

"The six months finally passed away, though to the impatient father they seemed years instead of months, and at last came the day when he might hope to see his son.

"He went out into his garden to await, with trembling impatience, the promised arrival of the fairy with his child.

"All at once a faint sound reached his ear. He listened intently. Again he heard the sound. Nearer and nearer it came. He rushed down to the great gates of the palace to catch the first glimpse of the form he so longed to see.

"In a short time he saw the white pony approaching, and on his back his son, grown larger

and handsomer than ever, was seated. He started towards the boy, and when he stood beside the pony and heard the loving voice of his son say, 'Father, dear father,' he fell fainting with joy to the ground."

"How did the boy get his voice?" asked the cat, as the mouse stopped an instant.

Just at that moment a robin flew down near them, and the cat crouched down, making ready to spring upon it. But the robin was too quick for her and flew away, and she turned towards the mouse to repeat her question. No mouse was there. He was scudding away towards his home as swiftly as his little feet could take him.

"Meow," growled the cat, "next time I catch a mouse, I'll eat him."

THE DUCK AND THE CHICKEN.

"WHAT is the matter with your feet?" asked a little chicken of a young duck that had lived in the barnyard with him but a few days.

The duck looked down at his feet, and then he said, in a perplexed tone, "Nothing is the matter with my feet. What made you think there was?"

"What makes you have that skin between your toes?" asked the chicken. "I don't have any."

"Why," answered the duck, good-naturedly, "I am a swimmer, you know. All swimming birds have such feet. You don't, because you can't swim."

"I think I could," answered the little chicken, who did not like to own there was anything other folks could do that he could not. "When we get to a pond, I am going to try."

They soon came to a pond and went down to the water.

"Let's see how you do it," said the chicken. "I suppose you learned a good while ago."

The duck laughed, but said nothing, — only swam out into the middle of the pond.

The chicken watched him carefully, and then said, "Yes, yes, I see now how you do it," and started into the water.

As soon as the water touched his feet, he stopped and began to flap his wings.

"What's the matter?" asked the duck. "Why don't you swim?"

"Don't be in a hurry," answered the chicken. "This is my first swim, you know."

"Is it?" laughed the duck; and, diving under water, he came up close to the chicken.

"O dear!" cried the chicken, "how you frightened me! I thought you were drowned!"

"No fear of that," answered the duck. "Just see how easy it is to swim," he added; "you push against the water with your feet, so," suiting the action to the word, "and off you go."

"But my feet won't push," said the chicken; "the water slips right through."

"I don't believe you can ever swim then," said the duck, paddling gaily about. "Better give it up."

"Well," said the chicken, after making a few more feeble efforts, "I suppose I shall have to own that I can't swim." He stood still a minute watching the duck, a little enviously, I am afraid.

Then a bright idea seemed to enter his head. He stretched himself, flapped his wings, and said, "Come, try a race with me up to the barnyard, will you? Ha! ha! Look here, now!"

Off he went as fast as his little feet could fly, leaving the duck to waddle along after him.

"We can't all do the same thing well," said the duck to himself, "and it is fortunate that we can't."

THE SNOW-FLAKES.

"HURRAH! We are going down to the earth," said a tiny snow-flake up in its cloud home to its brothers. "I heard King Frost and the north wind say last night that, if the east wind would come and help them, they would make some more snow-flakes, and send us all down to the earth."

"Oh, what fun!" cried the rest; "won't we have a fine race down! I wish the east wind would hurry and bring up his clouds."

"Here he comes now!" cried a little flake.

And sure enough, far out over the ocean came the east wind, driving the clouds filled with tiny water-drops before him.

King Frost and the north wind went forth to meet him when they saw him coming, and to breathe on the clouds which were flying fast before him.

Instantly the water-drops in the clouds were changed into beautiful little feathery snow-flakes, which leaped joyously from their cloud home and began their journey to the earth.

Faster and faster they came forth, chasing each other merrily along, and laughing gaily as the

strong winds caught them and whirled them about.

"You can't catch me!" cried one.

"Don't be too sure of that!" cried another.

"I'll be there first!" called out a third.

"Not if I get there before you," laughed a fourth, rushing along so swiftly that he was out of sight in an instant.

What fun it was, to be sure, and, when they finally reached the ground, how they rolled over and over each other, and flew here and there among the dead leaves and the bushes, till at last they were quite tired out and settled quietly down to rest for a while!

They had been quiet but a few minutes, however, when they heard a shout, and down the road came the schoolboys.

"Now for the fun!" joyfully cried the little snow-flakes. "Here come the boys to play with us!"

"A snowball match!" cried the boys. "Let's have a snowball match!"

"Yes," laughed the snow-flakes, "we like that."

And so, when the boys took up the snow, the little flakes clung closely together and did their very best to make the balls quickly.

Then how they laughed, and how the boys laughed and shouted as they flew through the air.

"We won't hit hard, though," said the snow-flakes, "for we don't want to hurt any one." The kind little snow-flakes!

After a short game of snowballing, the boys grew tired of this sport, and ran off to their homes to get their sleds.

So the little snow-flakes had a chance to rest awhile and to watch their brothers, who were hurrying down from their cloud home to join them on the earth.

"You are too late for the fun," they said to the newcomers; "we have just had a fine game of snowball with the boys."

"Oh, we shall have sport enough," they answered, "before we go off."

Just then, hearing footsteps, they looked up and saw coming down the road a boy somewhat larger than those who had been playing with them, and who was reading as he walked slowly along.

"I would n't give much for that boy," said the snow-flakes; "he is n't going to take any notice of us."

But when he came a little nearer to them, they

heard him say this : "' Without the sun there would be no vapor in the air ; without the vapor there would be no clouds ; and without the clouds there would be no snow ; so really the sun makes the snow.' That's queer, now," he added, stopping his reading and looking down at the snow at his feet. " I never knew that before."

" Well," said a snow-flake, looking up saucily, " don't you suppose there are a great many other things you don't know ?"

The boy stooped down without taking any notice of what the snow-flake said, and, taking up some of the snow in his hand, he went on : " How soft and white you are, you snow-flakes. I wish I had a magnifying glass ; then I could see your beautiful forms."

" This boy *does* take more notice of us than the other ones did," exclaimed a pleased little snow-flake, " only he does n't wish to play with us. I'll tell you how I look," he added, kindly, to the boy : " I look like a star, a six-pointed star, and my brother here has the form of a hexagon, all covered with little sparkling dots."

The boy did n't seem to hear the snow-flakes, or perhaps he heard them, but did n't understand snow language ; so he made no reply to the speech

of the little flake, but went on talking as if he had not spoken.

"Well," he said, "if the sun makes the snow for us, he takes it away from us again. I should like to know why it is that we cannot see the vapor when the sun is drawing it up through the air."

"You do see it sometimes, you know," answered a flake, "and you call it fog. Generally you cannot see it, because the particles of water which make vapor are so very, very small; so small that it takes many millions of them to make a drop of rain."

"And this vapor is rising all the time, too," the boy continued, "from the ocean, from ponds and rivers, from the ground, from plants and trees, from animals, from almost everything on the earth, and yet we know nothing about it till we see it over our heads in clouds. It is very wonderful."

"Yes, it is wonderful," replied the snow-flakes; "and there are many other wonderful things happening, which you will learn about when you are older."

As the snow-flake finished speaking, the boy walked away, and the little flake never saw him again.



I HEARD YOUR MOTHER SAY —.

FREDDIE'S ADVISERS.

"I DON'T want to go to school to-day," said little Fred to himself as he started down the road. "I don't see why little boys should be shut up in an old schoolhouse when the sun is shining and it looks so pleasant everywhere. I guess I won't go. I'll go down to the pond and have a good time. I wish I had my boat, but I suppose I can't get it."

So he left the road and climbed over a fence into a field, the nearest way to the pond.

Now, in this field a gentle old cow was feeding ; and when she saw the little boy she came towards him, thinking perhaps he had brought her some apples.

Fred thought she wanted some, and, as he had none, he said, "No, no, old Mooley. I have n't

anything for you to-day. I am only going to the pond to play awhile."

To his great astonishment, old Mooley stopped, and, looking him in the face, she said, "Why are you not in school? I saw all the other boys go by to school fifteen minutes ago."

"Did you speak to the other boys?" asked Fred, as soon as his surprise would let him.

"Oh, no," replied Mooley, "I never speak to boys that are doing right; but when I know that a little boy is doing wrong, and there is no one else near to speak to him, I feel as if I ought to."

"But I am not doing anything very wrong," said Fred. "I feel tired this morning, and I don't believe I could study much if I went to school. Here comes Carlo, too, and I know he wants me to play with him, don't you, old fellow?"

Fred was kind to Carlo, so the dog was very fond of him; but now, instead of springing towards his little friend and barking joyfully as he usually did, he walked slowly towards him, and, looking sorrowfully up into his face, said, "I heard your mother tell George French just now that you had started for school. What are you doing here?"

Too much surprised at first to say a word, Fred just stared at the old dog. But after a few minutes, as Carlo still stood looking at him as if waiting for an answer, he said, "I did n't know you could talk, Carlo. Why did n't you ever speak to me before?"

"Oh," replied Carlo, "I never speak to little boys who are doing right; but when I know they are doing wrong, and there is no one else to tell them so, I think it is my duty to."

"Well," said the little boy, "I am not going to take any notice of what you and old Mooley say. I think I know a great deal more than you do. You never went to school a day in your life," and he started on again.

He had taken but a few steps when he heard a rustling in the leaves near him, and then another voice said, "I saw all the other boys going into school just now. Did n't your mother send you to-day?"

Fred glanced up, and there was a pretty red squirrel looking at him with its bright black eyes.

Poor bewildered little boy! He did not know what to think!

"I must be dreaming," he thought, "but I know I am not asleep."

"Did your mother tell you you might go down to the pond?" asked the squirrel.

"Why did n't you ever talk to me before, if you knew how to talk?" Fred said, without answering the squirrel's question.

"I never talk to little boys that are doing right," replied the squirrel; "but when I know they are doing wrong, and there is no one else to speak to them, I think I ought to."

"You may speak if you want to," said Fred, "but I shall go to the pond just the same. You don't know anything."

Putting his hands into his pockets, Fred walked on, feeling rather uncomfortable, I dare say, but determined not to yield to the counsels of his advisers.

Suddenly a sweet little voice right at his feet said, "Don't go, Freddie; think how sorry your mother will be."

Fred looked down, and there was a bright-faced little buttercup looking up at him with such a pleading look that it almost made the tears come.

"I wish you would n't talk to me," he said, crossly, but with a quiver in his voice, and he tried to whistle as he walked slowly forward.

"I would n't talk to you if you were doing right," the buttercup answered; "but when I know that little boys are doing wrong, and there is no one else to say a word, I feel that I ought to speak."

Just then a robin flew down on a bush beside him, and he thought, "Now I know that bird will say something to me. I wish I could run away."

While this thought was passing through his mind, a soft voice said, "Stop a minute, little boy," and the robin came a little nearer. "I have just been up by your house, and I heard your mother say —"

"You stop now, you old robin!" broke in Freddie. "I won't listen to you!" And he threw himself down on the grass and burst out crying.

"O dear, dear," he sobbed, "I just hate everybody!"

The robin looked pityingly at the sobbing child for a few minutes, and then he flew to the top of a tree close by and sang one of his sweetest songs.

This is what he sang:

"Chirps the swallow, flying over,
Hums the bee among the clover,
Laughs the chipmunk, frisky rover,
'Life is very good.'

True the song they sing, I ween,
But, my boy, so sweet and clean,
This is what they really mean:
‘Life is *being* good.’”

Poor little Freddie listened to the beautiful song, and as he listened he thought, “They are all right when they say I am doing wrong. I know I am. I am a bad boy.”

He lay quite still till the robin had finished his song, and then rising and speaking in a low voice, as if talking to himself, he said, “Thank you, little robin. I will go straight to my mother and tell her all about it, and I am sure I shall never play truant again as long as I live.”

“Bow-wow-wow!” said Carlo, as he came bounding joyfully towards his little playmate,— and that was all he said.

But to Freddie it did not sound like that. He thought Carlo said, “Good, good. I’m so glad!”



I AM SWIMMING, BESSIE.

FRESH POND.

THE children were going to the pond to spend the whole long day ; even little Bessie, the four-year-old baby, was to be allowed to make one of the party, for Aunt Kate had consented to go with them and take care of the little mischief.

So a merry party set forth about eight o'clock, and after a pleasant drive of about two miles, arrived at the pond.

Fresh Pond, as it was called, was a small but very pretty pond, surrounded by great trees, and having on one side a very large rock called, from its shape, the Castle. What gave the pond its chief charm to the children was, that it was the home of the beautiful water lilies.

They could see the lovely white blossoms, with their green leaves, as soon as they came within sight of the pond.

After looking about for a nice shady place to leave the lunch basket, the two largest boys, Fred and Arthur, took the rowboat that was moored on one side and pushed out into the middle of the pond, where the largest and prettiest of the lilies grew. The children on shore watched the boys as they drew the beautiful lilies with their long, slender stems from the water and dropped them into the boat; and little Bessie said, "Oh, auntie, isn't they pretty? I want to go in the boat and get some."

"See that beauty out there, Art!" cried Fred, as he espied a particularly handsome one; "I must have that."

In his eagerness, he leaned a little too far over the side of the boat, and suddenly, with a loud splash, he fell into the water.

Little Bessie saw him fall, and ran screaming to Aunt Kate, crying, "Auntie! auntie! My Freddie's in the water and he'll get drowned!"

Aunt Kate knew Fred could swim like a duck, so she said to the frightened child, "Oh, no, Bessie, just watch and see what Fred will do."

So Bessie stopped crying and looked, with a very sober face though, at her brother.

Fred had heard the little girl scream, and called out to her, "I'm all right, Bessie, and I'll give you the lily I fell overboard to get." He tossed the lily into the boat as he spoke, and began to swim towards the shore.

Bessie had never seen any one swim before, and she watched the performance with much interest. As she saw that Fred came nearer and nearer to the bank, she cried out, "Oh, look, look! Freddie is crawling on the water!"

Fred laughed. "I am not crawling, Bessie," he said, "I am swimming! Watch me."

In a minute Arthur came up with the boat and the lilies, and then he and Fred retired to the "Castle," where, after wrapping himself in the shawl Aunt Kate had given him, Fred spread out his wet clothes in the hot sun to dry.

The children played hide and seek and hunt the button under the trees, and after lunch Fred and Arthur made cups and balls out of acorns, and Aunt Kate and Effie, Bessie's older sister, made wreaths of the oak leaves and trimmed all the hats in the company.

About four o'clock, the sun, which had gleamed

brightly through the trees all day, suddenly disappeared, and Aunt Kate then noticed that dark, heavy clouds were rolling swiftly up from the west, showing that a thunder shower was near.

She hastily summoned her little flock together, told the boys to harness old Gray as quickly as possible, and very soon they were proceeding as rapidly as the old horse would consent to carry them on their way home.

No rain fell until they had almost reached the house ; but then, as Arthur said, it came down in bucketfuls.

As they had taken the precaution to close the sides of the carriage, they were pretty well protected from the heavy rain, and little Bessie watched the fast falling drops and the bright flashes of lightning with delight. "Seems as if the little raindrops were playing tag with each other," she said to Effie.

They were soon at home and glad enough to sit down to the nice supper mother had ready for her hungry little folks.

"Oh, mamma!" cried Bessie, as soon as she was in the house, "I'm so glad you let me go, for I've had just the best time, and we've got a whole pailful of lilies!"

THE FAIRY QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY.

FAR away in the depths of a dim old forest there was heard one night the sound of the softest and sweetest music.

It was just about midnight on a fine moonlight night, and so perfectly still that the music, soft and low as it was, could be plainly heard for a long distance.

The chirping of the crickets was instantly hushed, the katydids ceased their shrill cry, and even a solemn old owl that was near by on a tree opened his round eyes wider than ever with astonishment and pleasure.

In a moment the owl nearly dropped from his perch, and a little mouse, who had been watching him, hidden under a burdock leaf, forgot its fear in its wonder at the sight of the wonderful musicians.

Two by two came a long line of little beings, dressed all in silvery white, each with a shining star on her forehead and with her tiny hands keeping time to the beautiful music.

In the midst of the column was a tiny carriage drawn by four bright green beetles.

In this carriage was the loveliest little creature of them all, dressed like the rest in shining white, but bearing in her hand a slender sceptre, which she waved gently as she listened to the music.

She was the Fairy Queen, and it was in honor of her birthday that all these little fairies had assembled.

When they reached an opening in the forest, where was a soft, green, mossy bank, they stopped. Two of the fairies went to the door of the queen's carriage, opened it, and spread a carpet of rose leaves, nicely sewed together, from the carriage to the mossy bank.

A sort of throne of rose and lily buds had been made on this green bank, and on it the queen took her seat, smiling and bowing as the multitude gathered about her.

Then they all joined hands and sang :

“ Gracious queen, we come before thee,
 Bringing gifts with faithful love.
 May thy future evermore be
 Cheered by blessings from above.”

After the song one of the fairies came forward and presented the queen with a beautiful golden wand, covered with little jewels that flashed in the moonlight.

Kneeling before the queen, the fairy said, as she presented the wand, "Please accept, honored queen, this token of our faithful love."

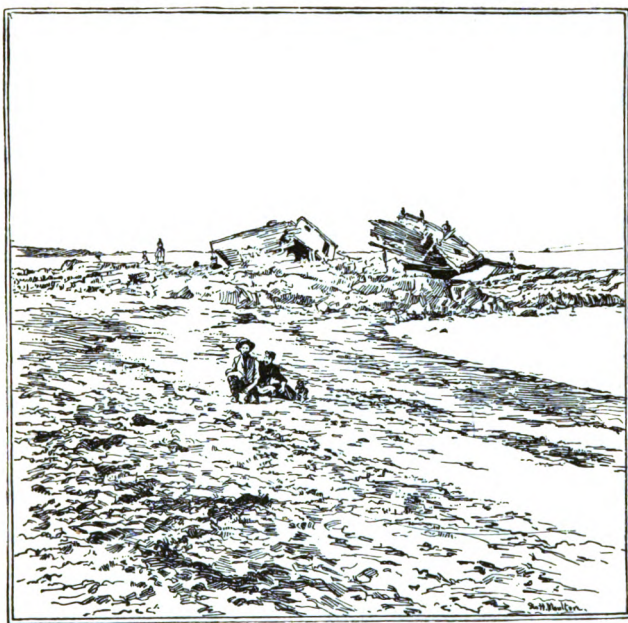
The queen arose and addressed them, thanking them for the beautiful gift, and then the other presents which the loving little people had brought were spread before her.

Oh, such beautiful presents! There were delicate cups made of the petals of the tiniest white flowers, little slippers made of birchbark and lined with down from the thistle, a fan made of the wing of a honeybee, and so many others that I can't begin to tell you all.

The queen expressed her delight and gratitude as she viewed the lovely offerings, and heard the kind and loving words of her faithful people.

Just as the last present was displayed, a faint light glimmered through the trees, and the queen raised her sceptre and said, "The time has come, dear friends, when we must part. Our duties call us now that day is near."

Instantly every fairy disappeared, except the two who were to conduct the queen back to her palace. Soon all was still again, and no one but the owl, the crickets, the katydids, and the mouse knew that anything unusual had happened.



THE WRECK.

GRANDMOTHER'S STORY.

ONE day, when Paul and Allan were visiting their grandmother, they asked her to tell them a story. So she told them this story:

When I was a little girl, I used to live in a small town on the shore of Massachusetts. There was a smooth, sandy beach about half a mile from our house, where, in summer, my playmates and I used often to go to play in the sand and to pick

up the pretty shells and stones that were to be found there.

We used to like, too, to watch the fishermen and mossers at their work: the fishermen out in their dories at their lobster trawls or fishing for cod or perch, and the others gathering the pretty sea moss or spreading it out to dry on the clean sand.

Sometimes one of the men would invite one of the children to go out in the boat with him, and oh, what a treat that was!

There was another great attraction to us children on the beach, and that was a very large rock which was called Well Rock, on account of the deep hole resembling a well that was in the middle of it. At high tide this great rock was surrounded by water so we could not reach it without getting wet; but when the tide was low we could easily walk to it, and what fun it was to us to climb to the top and look down into the well! Sometimes, if we happened to be there when the tide was right, we could hear the water dashing into the bottom of the well as it came rolling in from the ocean.

There were other great rocks on the beach, but none quite so high as Well Rock.

Besides these rocks on the beach there were great ledges of rocks, which, at low tide, could be seen all along the shore, making it a fearful place for vessels to approach, especially in winter.

I remember, two or three years before we left our seaside home to come to the city to live, one cold, snowy night in early spring, when the wind was blowing almost a gale and the snow was falling thick and fast, a schooner was driven in by the ledge and on to the rock nearest to Well Rock in such a way that it was held fast, in spite of the tremendous strength of the mighty breakers that dashed upon it and tried to force it back into the ocean.

In this schooner there were five sailors, and all of them were frozen to death in the rigging, where they had lashed themselves to escape being washed overboard by the great waves that swept over the vessel.

The next morning, when the tide was low and the fury of the storm was over, some fishermen went out to the wreck and found the poor sailors.

If they had only waited in the cabin until daylight, they might all have been saved. But in the dark night and the raging storm, they could not see how near to land they had come, so they

had done what seemed to be their only chance of saving their lives.

There was no way to get the wrecked schooner off the rock where it had struck, so there it remained for several years.

It broke in two after awhile from the poundings the great waves gave it in winter, but the old hulk still clung to the rock. Finally, the heavy storms of winter after winter broke it all up, and the pieces floated out to sea.

I have a picture of the old wreck as it looked the first summer after it came on the rocks; and sometimes as I look at it I seem to forget the many years that have passed since then, and imagine myself a child again at play on the beach.

STELLA'S JOURNEY.

OH, it was such a wonderful journey !

This was how it happened. Stella was standing at the window, looking far off over the wide ocean sparkling in the sunlight, and wishing she could go away, away to some distant country which she had never seen, when all at once she heard a low, rustling sound in the air, then a tinkle, tinkle, as of a silver bell, and in a moment, to her surprise and delight, there appeared before her the most wonderful and beautiful little boat !

And yet it was not exactly a boat : it seemed also to be a bird ; for at one end was a bird's pretty head, and in place of sails were the snowy wings of a bird. Around its neck was a row of little silver bells, and it was these bells that had made the tinkling sound she had heard.

"Oh, how beautiful !" cried little Stella. "What can it be !"

Then the bird opened its mouth, and a sweet, musical voice, like the sound of the silver bells, said, "Come with me, little girl. I will take you wherever you wish to go."

"Why, how did you know my wish, pretty bird-boat?" cried Stella.

"Oh, the wind heard it and came and whispered it to me," answered the boat, "so I came to you."

Then Stella sprang lightly into the boat and seated herself on the soft, velvet cushion. The bird-boat spread its beautiful white wings, and they began to glide swiftly through the air.

Over hills and plains, across wide rivers and beautiful lakes, they flew so rapidly that very soon they reached the distant ocean, over which the bird-boat took its flight.

When Stella saw the blue water of the mighty ocean rolling beneath her, she trembled and cried out with fear. But the bird-boat turned its head and said to her, "Fear nothing. You are safe with me."

So little Stella sat quietly, and soon they had passed over the ocean and had reached a country beyond it—a country where there is no winter, where all through the year the green leaves cover the trees, and brilliant flowers are always in blossom.

Then the bird-boat descended and hovered close to the earth, so that Stella could see the lovely flowers which were sprinkled thickly over it, and

could reach forth her hand and pluck them if she chose.

"Oh, how beautiful!" cried Stella, as she looked about her. "This land must be the home of the flowers. Let us stay here always."

No sooner had she spoken than the sunlight was gone; a black cloud had risen and shut it out.

Faster and faster the inky clouds rolled up and gusts of wind, before which the trees bent to the ground, quickly followed.

"Oh, let us go, dear bird-boat!" cried Stella. "This strong wind will sweep us away!"

But the bird folded its wings over the boat, and said, "Do not be afraid. Take the magic veil that is under the cushion where you sit, and spread it over the boat. It will protect us from all danger."

Stella did as the bird directed, and hardly had she arranged it when the terrible storm burst upon them. Trees were bent till their tops touched the ground; some were torn up by the roots; and the beautiful blossoms were torn from the stalks and scattered far and wide over the plain. The lightning flashed and the thunder rolled, and soon the rain fell in torrents.

But little Stella, under the magic veil, was protected from all its violence. Not a breath of wind nor a drop of rain could pass through its magic folds.

After the hurricane had spent its fury and the bright, blue sky was again visible, the bird-boat rose slowly, and soon they were moving swiftly away.

Once more they passed over mountains and plains, forests and deserts, till at last Stella could see in the distance a land which seemed to be covered entirely with snow and ice.

As she drew nearer to this land, waves of cold air came to meet her, and she shivered as the icy wind passed over her.

Then again the bird-boat said, "Take out the magic veil, little Stella, the cold air cannot pass through that;" and Stella spread it over the boat as she had done before.

The cold air could not touch her now, and swiftly the bird-boat glided on, till at last they reached the land where snow always covers the ground.

All around as far as the eye could reach, nothing but snow and ice were to be seen. Not a blade of grass, not a flower was there. The

bird-boat once more descended close to the ground, and as Stella looked over the dreary waste of snow stretched out before her, she said, "Who would wish to live in this cold land? No one, I am sure. It must be the home of the snowflakes alone."

"Do you not see those mounds of snow and ice?" said the bird-boat. "Those are the homes in which the people of this cold region live."

Just as he finished speaking, from out an opening in one of the low huts there came forth a man dressed all in fur. "Let us go away!" cried Stella, in a frightened tone, "the man will see us!"

"No fear of that," the boat answered; "this magic veil makes us invisible."

So Stella watched the man and saw him take a long spear and go to a break in the ice through which the water could be seen. In a short time he drew up on the ice a seal, which he soon despatched, in spite of its plaintive cries.

"He is cruel!" said Stella. "Why does he kill the poor little creature?"

"That poor little creature is his clothing and food," answered the bird-boat; "without it he would be poor indeed. Its flesh serves him for

food, he drinks the oil he obtains from it, and he uses this oil also to give him the light he needs in the long, cold night. Of the skin he makes the garments he wears ; so you see he must not be called cruel for taking its life.”

At last Stella’s eyes grew tired of the dazzling whiteness, and she said to the bird-boat, “Take me back, dear bird-boat, to my own home. I have traveled many miles and have seen many lands, but no spot in all the world is so pleasant and so dear to me as my own home.”

Then the bird-boat rose up and began its journey back to the country they had left. Rapidly they sailed forward, soon leaving the home of the snowflakes far behind them.

Stella says she remembers nothing more of this wonderful journey. How she reached home she cannot tell ; but there in her own little bed she found herself, with her mother standing beside her, saying, “Come, my little girl, the breakfast bell will ring in five minutes. I am afraid you will be late this morning.”



"ME TELL STOWY."

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY.

It was Ida Manning's twelfth birthday, and her mother had invited a little party of her young friends and schoolmates to spend the afternoon with her. Nothing had been said about it to Ida, however, so she was taken entirely by surprise when the little company appeared. "I didn't know you were coming," she said, as she hurried out to meet them, "and I'm ever so glad to see you."

"Me know. Mamma say me not tell," said little Dorothy, Ida's baby sister.

"How did you ever manage to keep it to yourself, Baby?" asked Arthur Lee, as he came up laughing.

"She did pretty well, I think," said Ida. "She didn't say a word to me, but I noticed a great deal of whispering between her and mamma. I thought, though, it was all about the present." Then the children had to examine and admire the birthday present, — a handsome rosewood writing desk stocked with everything needful.

"That's just the thing for you, Ida," said her cousin Arthur; "you are always writing poetry or something."

Ida laughed and said, "Do you mean that as a compliment, Cousin Arthur?"

After the children had all looked at and admired the new desk long enough, they went outdoors to play.

About four o'clock, when they were having, as Arthur said, such a beautiful time they could not bear to stop, one of those sudden showers that sometimes come up in summer interrupted their frolic, and sent them into the house in a hurry.

It was over in a few minutes, but left the grass and walks so wet that the little party had to give up outdoor games and stay on the piazza.

"What can we do now?" asked Ida, looking rather serious.

"Let's tell stories," said Mary Adams; "I just love to hear stories."

"Me do, too," said little Dorothy; "me tell stowy."

"Tell yours first, Baby," said Mary.

"Yes," answered the little girl. "Me love mamma, me love papa, me love Ida, love evewybody."

The children all laughed, and the happy baby laughed, too, and clapped her chubby hands.

"Me tell nice stowy, mamma," she said.

"That was a beautiful story, my pet," said mamma, looking up from her sewing.

"Edith Emery tells good stories," said Mary. "You begin, Edith, won't you?"

So Edith said:

EDITH'S STORY.

"I had my kitty in my arms one day when I was at my grandma's, and I was looking down into the well, watching one of the men draw up a pail of water. Just as the pail was about half-way up, what does the kitten do but give a jump to get away, and down she went, — into the well I supposed, but no, she dropped right into the pail of water! Poor kitty! She did n't think it was much fun, but how the rest of us laughed!

When John took her out of her bathtub, she sneezed and shook herself, and then ran off and hid, and for a day or two afterwards she seemed a little afraid of me, as if she thought I was to blame in some way for her mishap."

The children laughed at kitty's unpleasant experience, and then Edith said, "Now you tell one, Edwin."

"Oh, I can't tell stories," he answered ; "I don't know any."

"Yes, you must," the children insisted ; "we are all going to."

EDWIN'S STORY.

"Well, then. Once I fell into the pond, and Will Webster made a grab at me, and he fell in, too. Then Mr. Ellis happened along and fished us both out."

"Did you get drownded?" asked Dorothy, in a sympathizing voice.

"If I had, I should n't be here, should I?" said Edwin.

"Why not?" asked the baby.

"Oh, what a baby you are!" said Mary, catching her up and kissing her.

"Now it is your turn, Arthur," said Edwin.

ARTHUR'S STORY.

"Where I lived before I came to Westfield there was a boy named Nat Wheeler; his mother was dead, and he lived with his uncle and aunt. His father went to sea, and once when he came home he brought Nat a handsome gray and red parrot. This parrot soon learned to talk, and it could say many words as well as I can. When I went up there it would say, 'Halloo, Art,' and then it would say, 'Good night, go to bed now.'"

"All the stories so far have been true stories," said one of the children; "now who'll tell a made-up story?"

"I will," replied Frank Emerson; "listen now."

FRANK'S STORY.

"A whale was one morning taking a swim for his health when he met a seal hurrying along. 'What is your hurry, Friend Seal?' he said. 'Oh, I have heard dreadful news!' answered the seal. 'They say the seal hunters are here again after our skins. I am going to spread the news.' 'That is bad, certainly,' said the whale, 'and as I can swim faster than you can, I'll go too and tell every seal I meet to be on the look-

out for the men.' 'You are very kind,' the seal answered, as he swam away."

The children were much amused at this story, and Flora Ames said, "It does seem cruel for us to kill these poor little creatures just for the sake of their skins, does n't it?"

Then Lucy Graham was called upon for her story.

She said, "I am afraid I can't tell a made-up story, so I shall have to tell a true one."

LUCY'S STORY.

"Many years ago, when my grandfather was a little boy, he went with his father on a sea voyage. When they had been out for four or five days, a terrible storm came on. The wind blew a gale, the rain poured down, and the great waves kept breaking over the ship, till my grandfather thought they would sink it. Right in the midst of the gale, a sailor who was trying to do something to one of the sails was swept overboard. A great cry went up from the people on the ship, and every one supposed the poor man would be drowned.

"But, by good luck, the rope that was instantly thrown out happened to fall close by him, and he

seized it and was pulled aboard again almost immediately. 'You hardly gave me time to wet my feet,' said the jolly sailor when he was safe on board."

"O dear!" said Mary, "how glad the people must have been when they got him on board!"

Just then a pretty little squirrel ran along the top of the fence with something in his mouth. He ran so swiftly the children could not tell what he had, but they thought it might be a nut.

"That makes me think of a story I read once," said Flora. "Do you want to hear it?"

"Oh, yes!" answered the children.

FLORA'S STORY.

"A young squirrel once had a comfortable home in a hollow tree with his mother and his little brother. But he was never satisfied. He always wanted to travel and see the world. 'I want to know what the world is like, mother,' he would say. Finally he started off. He saw a large rock away off in the distance, and he said to himself, 'I will travel to that rock and sleep there to-night.' But the farther he traveled the farther away the rock seemed to get. At last, before he had reached it, he heard a frightful

rushing noise over his head, and before he had time to think what was coming, a fierce great bird was down and had seized him. He felt himself going up, up in the air, and oh, how he wished himself back in his snug little home ! But the bird held him fast in her claws and flew on and on, till it seemed to the poor squirrel they must have traveled hundreds of miles.

"All of a sudden, he saw another great bird coming—an eagle ! The bird that was holding him saw it too, and giving a loud cry of terror, she dropped him. Down, down, down he fell, and when he reached the ground, where do you think he found himself ? Why, right at the very tree where was his own nice, pleasant home !"

"Oh, was n't that splendid !" said little Nellie Lee. "Was his mother there ?"

"I think she was, and his little brother, too," answered Flora.

"Now we ought to have some poetry," said Arthur. "Have n't you some hidden away in your writing desk, Ida ?"

"Why, yes," answered Ida, "I believe I have. Would you like to hear it ?"

"Yes, yes, goody !" cried the children.

So Ida went upstairs, and in a few minutes came back with the poetry.

"Here is a little piece I wrote yesterday," she said.

IDA'S STORY.

"One night when the great moon was sailing
 Round and bright through the deep of the sky,
 And the soft, fragrant breezes of summer
 Were dreamily wandering by,
 All at once, through the hush of the midnight,
 Came a murmur as faint and as sweet
 As the glen knows in whose dewy covert
 The bright troops from fairyland meet.

"I rose from my bed in amazement
 To learn what the strange sound might be,
 And, looking forth into my garden,
 What should my astonished eyes see
 But the flowers, — roses, lilies, and pansies
 And all the rest, — quite at their ease
 Walking out, making calls on their neighbors,
 And chatting as gay as you please.

"I don't know how long the fun lasted,
 For somehow I dropped off to sleep,

And never woke up till the day broke,
 And the birds were beginning to peep.
 And when I looked into the garden
 To see if the frolic was done,
 There sat all the gay little posies
 Asleep on their stalks, every one."

Just as Ida finished reading, the supper bell rang, and Mrs. Manning came out and said, "Come, children, I think you must be hungry by this time. Let the rest of the stories wait till after supper."

The happy little company very willingly accepted the invitation, and followed her into the dining room.



MINOT'S LEDGE LIGHTHOUSE.

"So you want a story, do you, boys?" Uncle Hal said; and the two eager little faces, sparkling with delighted anticipations, were raised to his own. "And a true one, eh? Well, let me see. Did I ever tell you about the loss of the Minot's Ledge Lighthouse? No? Then we'll go back for thirty years or so to the time when your Uncle Hal was a small boy, and take a look at the old lighthouse which used to stand on the ledge of rocks of that name, off the shore of the town of Cohasset.

"These rocks were the terror of sailors for many years, for, being situated where vessels are

constantly passing and repassing, they probably caused more shipwrecks than any other ledges on the coast.

"The old lighthouse was built on the ledge farthest out at sea, — the outer Minot, as it is called. But it was a very different structure from the present one, which you have seen, I suppose.

"It was formed of heavy wrought-iron pillars securely fastened together, and sunk to a depth of five feet into the solid rock, surmounted by an iron tower.

"The present one, which it took five years to build, is made, as you know, entirely of stone.

"I lived in Scituate, the next town to Cohasset, when I was a boy, and from the windows of the house where I lived the lighthouse could be very plainly seen. Many a cold winter's night I've watched them light the lamp in the tower as soon as darkness began to fall, and wondered how many ships would be saved from wreck on the fearful rocks by its warning light.

"But this is n't telling you about the destruction of the lighthouse, is it?

"It was on Monday, the fourteenth of April, 1851, that the severest storm known for many

years on this coast came on. The wind had been blowing from the eastward for several days before, but on this day it increased so much that at night, when my father and I went out to the barn to feed the cattle, we could hardly stand against it. I remember my Uncle Will came into our house that evening and said to my father, 'If the lighthouse stands through this gale, I shall never fear for it again.'

"It seems there had been some talk before this about the safety of the lighthouse in a very severe storm, many believing that the iron pillars which supported it would not be strong enough to resist the force of the ocean in a furious storm.

"All Monday night the wind continued blowing, increasing in violence every minute.

"The old house shook and rattled as the fierce wind roared and whistled round it, and my bed rocked so that in my dreams I thought I was out at sea in a small boat, over which I had lost all control, and was being dashed about at the mercy of the wind and waves.

"Finally I thought a tremendous wave came rushing in from over the ocean, and, striking my frail craft, overturned it and sent me headlong into the water.

"With a start I awoke, and it was well I did; for the fierce wind had torn a limb from an old oak tree that grew close to the house, and it had struck against the window of my room, shattered the glass, and scattered the pieces all over the floor.

"In through the broken window the furious wind and rain were driving, and in another moment I should have been drenched to the skin.

"I sprang out of bed, hurried on my clothes, and went downstairs to tell what had happened.

"There I found two or three of the neighbors talking with my father about the damage already done by the terrible storm, and expressing great anxiety for the safety of the lighthouse unless the storm should very soon abate.

"We could see the lighthouse quite plainly in spite of the blinding storm, and as I looked at it I could see that it did not stand so erect as usual, but was leaning over slightly to one side.

"'No chance for it, I fear,' said one of the men as we looked.

"'I pity the poor fellows who are out there,' said another.

"'Can't something be done to save them?' I cried. 'Can't a boat be sent to them?'

" 'No,' my father answered, sadly, 'the attempt would have been made if we had not known it would be useless. No boat could live five minutes in so tremendous a sea.'

"I went out into another room to look at the angry ocean from that side of the house, and just imagine my terror when I saw the water almost up to our garden fence !

"I rushed back, screaming, 'Father, father, the ocean is going to carry our house away too !'

"The men went to look out when they heard my cries, half smiling at my fright, and yet wondering what could cause it.

"After a glance from the window, my father said, 'Why, the ocean must have broken into Great Pond. This has not happened for more than thirty years. Don't be frightened,' he added, turning to me, 'the water won't come much higher to-day. It is nearly high tide now.'

"Well, boys, it continued blowing all that day and the next with the utmost fury, till at last, on Wednesday night it was a perfect hurricane. The rush of the mighty wind mingling with the deep, incessant roar of the ocean made a tumult that was appalling to far stouter hearts than mine.

"Through both these days we had watched the lighthouse with fear and dread, for it was now almost certain that it would not stand through the storm, and great sorrow was felt by all for the sad fate of the two keepers who must perish with it when it went down.

"At ten o'clock on Wednesday night, my father and I looked out at the light, which was burning brightly at that time, showing that the brave men were mindful of their duty to the last.

"'I am afraid we shall never see it again, my boy,' said my father, as we turned away.

"Thursday morning, as soon as it was light, I was out of bed and at the window. I looked eagerly out over the ocean. Nothing was to be seen but huge white-capped waves rolling in and breaking with a hoarse, deep roar on the beach. The lighthouse was gone.

"The bell was heard on shore for the last time at one o'clock on Thursday morning."

PEACE, LOVE, AND HOPE.

ONCE upon a time, long ago I think it must have been, there lived, in a beautiful palace at the bottom of the bright blue sea, a gentle little fairy named Peace.

Peace had not always lived in this ocean palace ; once she had lived on the land. Her home was in as pretty a spot as you would ever wish to see. Bright flowers were around it, leafy trees shaded it, and the birds sang their joyous songs near it all day.

"But, ah !" said gentle Peace, "though my own home was calm and peaceful, I could hear the sounds of anger and of quarrels, and sometimes from a distance would come the fearful sounds of war.

"I could not bear these painful sounds, so at last I left my pleasant little home, and came to this still, cold palace to live."

And here for many years she had lived quietly and happily, out of the reach of all the tumult and strife of the busy world above her, hearing only the low, soft murmur of the water as it

rippled round her palace. For even the stormy roar of the ocean was hushed to a mournful murmur before the sound reached her quiet dwelling.

But at length the desire to see once more her sister fairies, whom she had left when she came to her ocean home to live, grew so strong that she resolved to ascend to the land for a short time and visit her former home.

So, one pleasant morning she stepped out of her palace door, and, rising slowly up through the blue water, at last she stood on the shore above.

Pausing for a moment, and gazing half sorrowfully on the familiar spot, she hastened away in quest of her dear sisters.

She had gone but a short distance when she saw coming towards her the one she wished most of all to see — her sister Love. Peace hurried forward to meet her, and clasped her in her arms.

"O Love!" she cried, joyfully, "I have missed you so much, and it makes me so happy to see you! But," she added, hastily, "why do you look so sad? What has happened to grieve you?"

"Dear Peace," answered the fairy, "my eyes are tired at the sight of the suffering and wretchedness about me, and my heart aches for the sorrows I have so little power to heal."

"Leave them, my sister," said Peace, eagerly, "leave them, and come to my ocean home to live, where no painful sight or sound ever comes, where we may live forever free from all care and trouble."

But Love slowly and sadly shook her head. "No, Peace," she answered, gently; "my place is here, here among these mortals. I have no right to live for myself alone. Think how much more sad their lot would be should I leave them. And, dear sister," she added, earnestly, "forgive me if I pain you, but it seems to me that your duty lies here, also, among mortals. They need you as much as they need me."

Peace looked thoughtfully down, but made no answer.

Just then there appeared another fairy sister, whom, when she drew near, they recognized as bright-faced little Hope.

"Ah, Hope," they said, looking in her cheerful face, "how could we live without you? What good errand do you come from now?"

"I have just been trying to comfort a lonely mother," Hope answered, "whose only son is a sailor, and from whom she has heard nothing for many long months. And I think I helped her,

too," she said, looking up with her pleasant smile, "for she looked far less sad when I left than when I entered her dwelling. I shall visit her every day till we have news from the boy."

Peace looked more thoughtful still, and a troubled look came over her face. "You would not think it right, then, to leave her," she asked, "and go far away from all cares and sorrows, where you can almost forget that such things are?"

Hope looked up in surprise. "Leave her," she said, "leave her when I am all she has to comfort her in her loneliness! Do you think I could be so selfish, so wicked? No; my duty is here, among mortals, to aid and to cheer them all I can, and that duty I shall perform."

Peace bowed her head as she listened, and her eyes filled with tears.

When Hope had finished speaking, she said, in a low tone, "Thank you, my dear sisters, for showing me so plainly what *my* duty is. I will no longer lead the selfish life I have led for so many years. I will take my place again among mortals, and do all in my power to aid you in your efforts to make the world better and happier. Let me visit once more my ocean home, and then I will bid it farewell forever."

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